

THE · TEACHING · OF
MODERN · LANGUAGES

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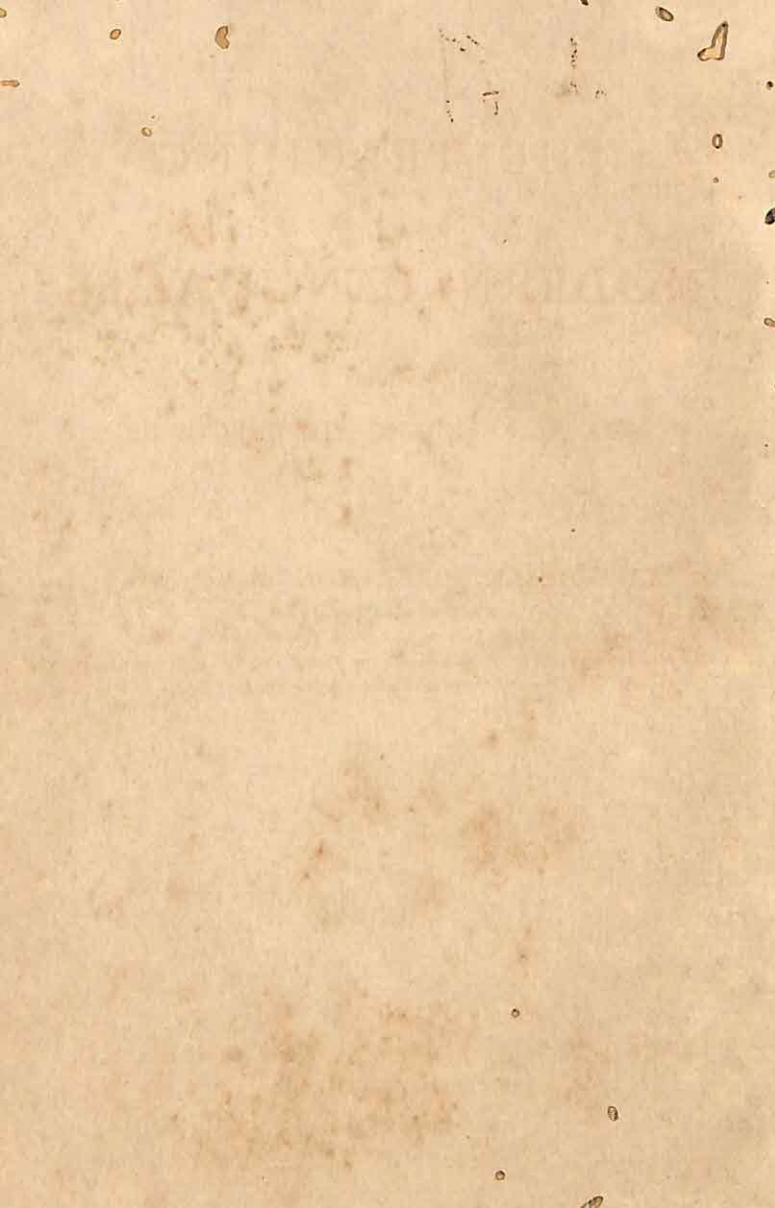




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~~Ed 87~~ ~~Ed 42~~
THE TEACHING

OF

MODERN LANGUAGES

WITH

SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BIG TOWNS

BY

CLOUDESLEY BRERETON, M.A.CANTAB.

LICENCIÉ-ÈS-LETTRES, PARIS

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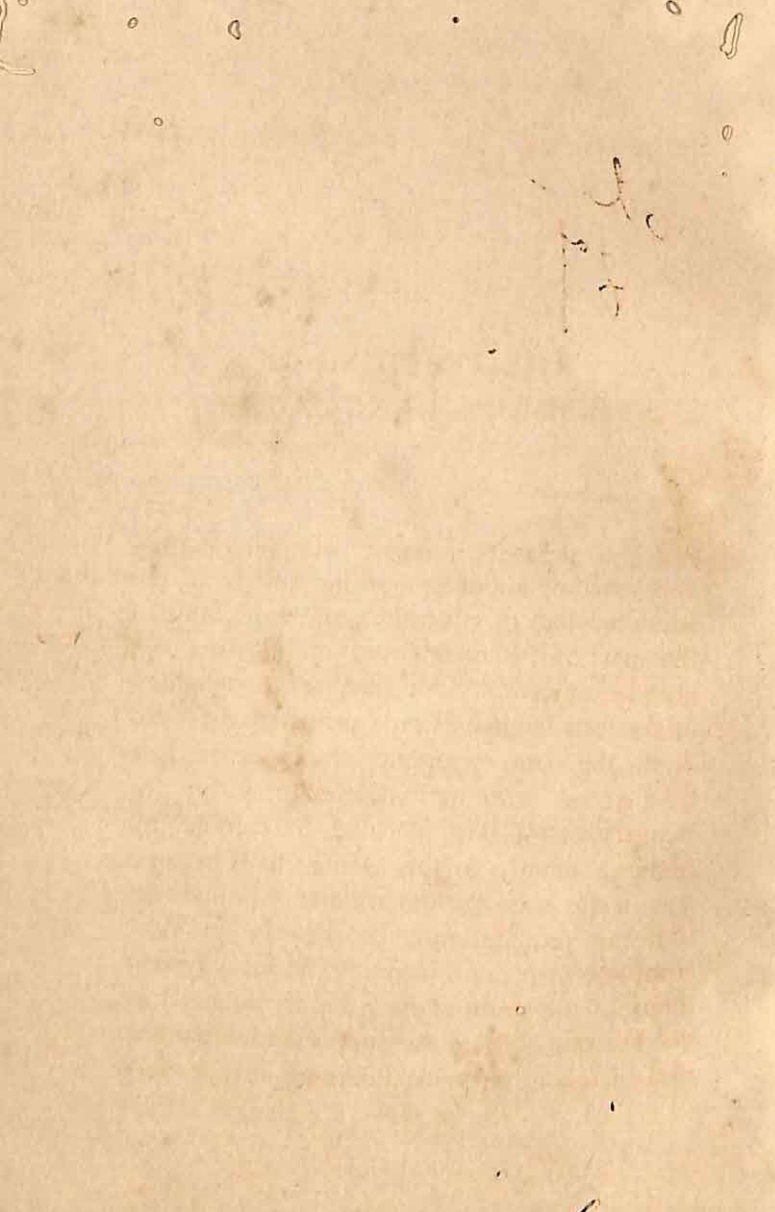
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PREFACE

THE subject-matter of this small volume has already formed the substance of three lectures on the Teaching of Modern Languages, delivered during the Lent Term of 1905 at the London School of Economics. The author can only hope that in their revised form they will meet with as kindly a reception from the wider public to which they now appeal as they did from the very sympathetic audience which greeted their first appearance.



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THE TEACHING OF MODERN LANGUAGES

I.

AT the present moment the remodelling and rearrangement in our big towns of the whole system of education, and especially of that part of it known as secondary, gives us a unique opportunity for putting the teaching of modern languages on a proper basis. No doubt the same opportunity for reform exists, to a certain extent, in the country, but for two reasons I have decided to confine my remarks mainly to the towns: first, because it is in the large agglomerations of population that the problem may be seen in its most complete form, and secondly, because a good many of the counties have hardly touched as yet the question of the supply and organisation of secondary education, and so *a fortiori*

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are still more unprepared to consider the question of the teaching of modern languages in their schools. Three of the largest towns in England have already recognised the need of inquiring into and reorganising the teaching of this most important element in the curriculum. The Education Committee of the London County Council instituted last year an inspection of thirty-seven London schools, on which a report was made by Professor Rippmann and Dr. Edwards, and again at Liverpool and Birkenhead Professor Sadler commissioned me to prepare a memorandum on the organisation of the teaching of modern languages, which involved the inspection of all the public secondary schools in both places as well as of a goodly number of private schools.

The need of such a reorganisation on a large scale is all the more necessary as we seem on the eve of not merely building new schools or of making existing ones more efficient, but also of remoulding the curricula on more scientific lines than hitherto. Opinions doubtless still differ very widely, but probably most persons who have thought over the matter will agree that a proper curriculum must contain a certain propor-

tion of literary and scientific elements. It may be unmistakably classical, it may be preponderatingly scientific, but it will generally be admitted that unless in either case adequate representation is given to the minority element, the curriculum is bound to suffer from the various ills which usually accompany undue specialisation, such as narrowness of views, interests, and sympathies on the part of the pupils, undue worship of the letter or undue worship of isolated facts, inability to use one's powers of observation or inability to express one's self in a lucid and logical fashion.

Hitherto the literary element in our first-grade schools has, as a rule, been unduly represented by classics, or at least by Latin, supplemented by a modicum of modern languages and English, the former not infrequently and the latter often being taught in a perfunctory and haphazard fashion. In the second-grade schools, in which, as the London inspectors pointed out, classics are often a disappearing quantity, there is, nevertheless, not seldom much to be done to bring the teaching of modern languages and of the mother tongue up to the mark. It is imperative, therefore, at the present moment

to put modern language teaching on a sound footing, not only in order to provide the indispensable literary element in second-grade schools, but also to promote thereby the reform of the teaching of modern languages in the larger schools. In that way only can we hasten the abolition of compulsory Greek and other anachronisms at the older Universities by proving by experiment and experience that French and German can furnish not merely a substitute, but an alternative for classics. But such a reform implies the recognition of two factors which are too often ignored by English teachers, for rote and tradition are still the ruling form in many English schools. One factor may be defined as consistency of aim, and the other as consistency in method. What, then, should be the aim of the teacher in modern languages? Many persons, including probably the majority of parents, would say that it was to enable the pupil to speak or write French or German with an eye to earning his living. This view of the subject, as a bread and butter study, is sound enough, yet when we consider the comparatively small percentage of those learning modern languages who will ever turn their knowledge to adequate advantage,

whether pecuniary or otherwise, we see how insufficient of itself the purely utilitarian reason is, though it is the one which is usually put forward. It must, in fact, be supplemented by a second reason, which is, or should be, valid for all who learn the subject, namely, that the language should serve as a means of culture and mental development.

Now all reorganisation must be both pedagogical and administrative. It concerns either the school or the local authority, or both. The natural impulse might well be to begin with what the local authority should do and then work back to the school, but reflection shows that the correct procedure is exactly the reverse. Only when we have settled in what way and to what extent a subject should be taught, can we show how and when the local authority can come to the aid of the school. We must, in fact, measure the foot before we make the boot.

There is, further, another factor in the case which cannot be ignored. We have not before us the almost easier task of calling into being the teaching of an entirely new subject. We have to take up and improve one which is already being taught in our schools, well in some cases, rather indifferently in others, by

persons who are by no means agreed on the exact methods to be used. While holding ~~strongly to the correctness of certain principles and methods in modern language teaching, one must necessarily move with caution, transforming the teaching rather than attempting to revolutionise it on the spot.~~ We cannot make a clean sweep of the teachers even if we would, nor can we expect those who are but moderately equipped radically to alter their methods. Our best plan is to encourage them as far as possible to improve themselves, and to introduce gradually the new system. In a word, there must necessarily be a period of transition.

But before prescribing what the new system ought to be, it is essential to obtain a comprehensive survey of the present condition of modern-language teaching in England. Then, and then only, shall we understand the complexity of the problem and be able to see how the different strands of teaching may be combined to form a sound staple of instruction, the threads of the new method being so interwoven with the old as to produce the least break in continuity.

Now the teaching of modern languages in England at the present time is chiefly remark-

able for the infinite varieties of types. For the sake of clearness, however, we may distinguish between three main schools or tendencies, which we may call respectively the Right, the Left, and the Centre.

The first group, which is by no means homogeneous, is principally composed of the *vieille garde* of teachers who, owing to their bringing up, or from lack of sufficient all-round knowledge, continue to teach on the old orthodox, classical lines. Their recipe consists of plenty of grammar, translation, and composition. The modern language is treated *perinde ac cadaver*, and is parsed, analysed, and dissected like a dead language. The mode of study is essentially an investigation of the dead organ rather than of its living function, of its dynamic powers. Little or no attempt is made at linguistic vivisection. The ear is quite untrained, accent is largely neglected, and in extreme cases foreign words are not even pronounced but spelt out in class. Conversation is distinctly at a discount.

The Left, on the other hand, which forms a still less homogeneous body, is composed of the more militant reformers. Great and occasionally undue stress is laid on the oral

side of the foreign language. The straitest sect among the "new-methodists" does not allow a word of the mother tongue to be heard in the classroom. The first lessons are purely *viva voce*. In some cases there is no writing, not even in phonetic script; ordinary texts are naturally barred. The teacher is the *fons et origo* of everything, the creator or conjuror who gradually, by means of pictures and dumb-crambo, produces the language, so to say, out of nothing. Phonetics are generally *de rigueur*. *Lauttafeln* are much in evidence, and when a text is introduced it is generally printed in the phonetic script. The written work is not infrequently insufficient, and the lack of methodicalness is not unknown.

Between these two extreme wings comes the main body of teachers whom we have styled the Centre, represented by persons at every possible stage between the Right and Left, but united by the more or less conscious aim of desiring to arrive at a compromise between the two ideals—something, in fact, between the deaf and dumb scholar of the Right and the animated phonograph of the Left. Sometimes the "cross" produced is excellent, in other cases it is a

sort of mongrel which partakes of the defects of both. The principal points which distinguish the members of this group are the insistence laid on the reading-book as the centre and source of instruction, and the attempt to practise the ear and tongue without neglecting the claims of grammar.

Let us look a little closer at the main tenets of the Right and Left. When we have analysed their aims and methods we shall not only be in a position to gauge the views of the Centre, but may also possibly be able to postulate to some extent what seems the best way of teaching modern languages.

We will begin with the Right. What are their aims and how do they hope to attain them? Probably they would state that their aim was threefold, namely, to give a mental discipline of the best possible kind, to teach the modern language in a scholarly fashion, and in the third place to utilise the modern language as a means of teaching the mother tongue. They would insist that the grammar drill, the parsing, the picking to pieces of the texture of a foreign language and the reproduction of it in literal English, the analysis of constructions, the practice of reconstructing these constructions when turning English

idioms into their foreign equivalences, provide the very finest training for the logical faculties. They would further argue that these analytic processes furnish an unrivalled training in clearness and accuracy. More especially would they assert that translation was an admirable means of teaching the mother tongue. And finally, they would contend that the close study of the structure of a foreign language would alone make a man a scholar in the true literary sense of the word; in short, that a grammatical and critical study of the text was an indispensable aid to an appreciation of literature. They would ridicule the Left wing as a mere school of "patter and chatter," only fit to turn out foreign bagmen, courriers, and waiters, and in their contempt for modern literature would surfeit their pupils with Corneille and Racine.

Let us now take the Left wing. Their aim is more especially to teach the language so that the pupil may be able to understand, pronounce, speak, and even write it. They often take little heed of the logical training of the faculties. They pour scorn on the excessive grammatical analysis of the Right, and insist on the large *rôle* played by imita-

tion in the learning of languages, especially in the case of young children. They emphasise the education of the ear; they point out the value of pictures and gestures as valuable adjuncts to the cultivation of the visual and muscular memory. So far from believing that the foreign language is the best way of teaching the mother tongue, they deliberately keep the two as distinct as possible. They argue that neither translation nor composition can adequately teach either language. Their argument runs as follows:—The pupil who turns English into French may become in some ways a master of the foreign language, but he never arrives at a stage at which the two languages are divorced from one another in his mind. He always sees the French through an English medium; like black care, the English is ever behind the French in his mind. In a word, he never learns to *think* in the language. The minority who lay stress on the importance of written work further point out that such a pupil never learns to think in an orderly fashion in the foreign tongue, which is the real meaning of the word “composition.” The consequence is that, even when the pupil writes a letter in the foreign language, the English

idioms involuntarily occur to him, with the result that his letter is a more or less pidgin version of the foreign idiom. In the case of the mother tongue he does not learn to compose in it either. The foreign idiom nearly always overshadows even the best translation, for the most flexible translation is only the happiest of imitations. Even when the pupil forges for himself a good style, as far as phrasing is concerned, he can never learn from mere translation the far more difficult art of putting his phrases into paragraphs and his paragraphs into one harmonious whole. He never learns to compose in the true sense of the word. A vast deal of the weakness in English essay-writing comes from a neglect of the practice of free composition, in which the pupil has to arrange and co-ordinate his ideas. Now the Left wing do not rule out the teaching of the mother tongue from the school curriculum. On the contrary they insist on its being taught directly and not incidentally. They hold that a mastery of the mother tongue must facilitate the mastery of a foreign language. If somewhat negligent of the literature, they maintain that the study of the foreign language must embrace as wide a knowledge as practi-

able of the history, geography, and especially of the social condition of the people. Their theory is based on the motto: "What do they know of French, who only French know?" Anything that crops up incidentally in the daily lesson should be illustrated by the teacher with explanations out of his own experiences, or by pictures, or even objects such as coins, newspapers, and the actual products of the country. The study of these so-called *Realien* is often supplemented and systematised by lessons from a conversation-book dealing with the experiences of everyday life.

This side of the teaching has not merely a utilitarian, but a moral aim. The reformers rightly argue that one of the best ways of diminishing the crass prejudice and unreasonable contempt with which the members of one nation often regard those of another is to give the pupil, as far as time allows, an intelligent insight into the life and thought of neighbouring peoples. They look to the teacher not merely for a sympathetic handling of his subject, but also for a friendly attitude towards these countries. In their eyes he is at once the interpreter of foreign ideas and also an effective "go between," who introduces

John Bull to Jacques Bonhomme, and kindles in John a genuine appreciation of Jacques' many strong points. When we recall how the hostility to Great Britain of a whole nation like the United States before the Cuban War was maintained and intensified by the anti-British tone of the average American teachers and especially of the school-books, we can realise the importance that the rôle of the teacher may assume in the establishment of international goodwill and amity on which alone any true *entente cordiale* can be based.

One must always be grateful to the pioneers in teaching as in every other art and science. We are deeply indebted to the reformers not merely for the happy innovations and improvements they have introduced, but also for the unsuccessful experiments they have conducted, and even for the excesses they have committed, because in the latter case they put us on our guard as to what to avoid. On the other hand we have reason to be thankful to the old-fashioned teachers for having held fast to certain truths that the "new-methodists" have been prone to overlook or ignore. The Centre therefore appears to be in the right in attempting to combine

what is best in the two methods. Nevertheless the question remains, In what proportion should they be combined? The exact point, as we shall attempt to show, seems to lie more in the direction of the Left than in that of the Right—what in fact we may call the Left Centre. This does not imply, however, that there is absolutely any hard and fast best method. The best method is not infrequently the method that the teacher, owing to his ability and idiosyncrasy, can carry out best. This is particularly true of the exceptional teacher with his moral earnestness, his enthusiasm, his power of discerning a way when the way, as far as we can see, looks difficult, and his power of leading his flock along it or over it, and of stimulating them to unusual exertion. No way can be condemned on the score of difficulty if the flock can surmount it. Rather, the very difficulty develops in them stronger virtues than our more equable gradients can produce. The truth is, all these incommensurable qualities render it impossible for us to work out a cut-and-dried solution of how the subject should be taught to all and sundry. Nevertheless, thanks to the law of averages, it is possible to indicate for the ordinary teacher certain

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methods and practices which it seems highly desirable to observe in order to ensure the success of his own teaching and of the general teaching of the subject throughout the school. When there are two or more teachers, there must be harmony of method. This does not mean conformity; a sixth form cannot be taught in the same fashion as a first form. But the foundation lessons in the lowest class should be laid with a view to carrying and supporting the top story in the highest. Too often, for lack of symmetry in the methods adopted, a boy receives an education which at every stage reveals a diversity of architecture, owing to the variety of teaching methods in vogue in the different forms.

With the standardisation of methods in view, we will now attempt to define the position of the Left Centre and its respective indebtedness to the Right and Left. It holds that the Left are undoubtedly right in their insistence on the spoken word. The younger the children, the more oral the teaching should be. In fact, in the case of children under nine, what with pictures and pantomime, one can largely dispense with a text-book, and the whole lesson can be turned into a kind of informal *causerie*, provided the pupils are

allowed to take an active hand in the game in the way of simple or concerted actions, such as opening and shutting their desks, rising up or sitting down, coming up to the teacher's desk, etc. Under cover of these movements the various persons of the simple tenses of the verbs can be practised. Variety may be further added by the introduction of songs, dialogues, and games for one or more persons, in which scope is given for simple elocution and gesture. A judicious amount of phonetic drill can be sandwiched in from the first. It is not difficult to gain the children's interest by showing them how the sounds are made, but the drill should be laid aside, as soon as the children show signs of weariness, in favour of something more exhilarating. In pronunciation not only should a proper accent, but clear articulation be insisted on from the very beginning. It is a matter of common occurrence in English schools to find children with a fairly correct accent speaking under their breath or failing to open their mouths sufficiently.

There is no harm in beginning modern languages thus early with young children, provided the teaching is largely informal, which, of course, does not imply that it should be

formless. On the contrary the teacher must think out very carefully what is to be aimed at, and how it can be produced, the main object being to teach the children to understand and speak the language and take a delight in it. The word "teacher" is used indifferently throughout the present book for a male or female teacher, but with these small children, whether boys or girls, the best teacher is undoubtedly a woman. There is one other caveat to enter against the too early initiation into a foreign tongue, and that is that the hours devoted to such lessons must not encroach on the time which ought to be devoted to the mother tongue. The Left are quite right in their insistence on a thorough grounding in the mother tongue. One may take it as a postulate of sound teaching—though the Right will probably bitterly contest it—that the study of the mother tongue should always be in advance of that of any other language.

With pupils of nine and upwards the teaching may be made more formal. The pupils have already learned the arts of reading and writing. The phonetic script may be used and phonetic drill practised by means of *Lauttafeln*. The consensus of opinion

seems to be that if dropped after a year or six months, it does not render the acquisition of the ordinary spelling any harder, especially if the pupils are not allowed to write it. Songs and dialogues have also here their place. A suitable reading-book, composed not of disconnected sentences, but of short stories, should be introduced as early as possible. Great stress should be laid on class-reading, which should be practised both separately and in chorus.¹ Grammar too, which is at times neglected by the "new-methodists," should be largely taught inductively, being quarried out of the pages of the reader as the pupil goes along. There is probably little harm in learning the bare elements of accidence by heart, though this drudgery may be lightened and rendered easier by the forms being given to be learned

¹ I am well aware that there is a certain prejudice in some of the larger schools against practising in chorus. One might, however, point out that the difficulty can hardly be more formidable than has been the introduction of French conversation and French accent into classrooms in which the subject was regarded, if not as a by-word, at least as a by-subject by the pupils, who prided themselves on pronouncing French with as Britannic an accent as possible, when they did not overtly mimic the unhappy teacher's intonation. Moreover the chorus system already obtains in choir practices, not to mention the school chapel.

in the guise of sentences, such as *j'aime mon père, tu aimes ton père*, etc.—a practice which is also a help to conversation. Syntax, on the other hand, should be mainly a matter of induction. The rules should be made as far as possible a subject of discovery for the pupils, but the teacher will bear in mind that all teaching is a match against time, and when there is a danger of time being wasted, through the class being unable to disentangle the rule, he will not hesitate to cut the Gordian knot and tell them outright. Above all, from time to time the grammatical data thus collected should be synthesised and catalogued in the pupil's mind by means of revision out of a simple grammar. Thereby a double advantage is secured: the logical instincts are developed and the pupil's scattered and diffuse knowledge is reduced to a portable and handy shape. The revolt of some of the extreme reformers against the classical, dry-as-dust methods has carried them too far. What should we think of a library in which there were as many separate catalogues as there were authors, but no catalogue had been made of the library as a whole? It is not enough to acquire facts: one must learn to pack them, store them, and render them

ready for reference. Simple class directions should be given in French, but the teacher must make sure that they are proper idiomatic French, not bald translations of English phrases. The teacher's whole attitude towards the mother tongue is to make as sparing a use of it as he can, but it will not be tabu. He will in fact regard it as a temporary scaffolding, to be taken down as soon as possible. It is possible that those who rigorously exclude the mother tongue from the classroom by no means exclude it from the pupil's mind. The picture of *un cheval* when shown to a beginner calls up the word "horse" in his mind, even if it be never mentioned in class. No doubt, in a good many cases the picture helps us to dispense with the mother tongue, but when there is obviously a difficulty on the part of the class in understanding the meaning of any term, and especially of an abstract term, it is far preferable for the teacher to say outright what it means, adding that when it turns up again the pupils will have to make it out by means of explanations in French. Much time will thereby be saved. The class will not be in danger of becoming listless from the fact that some have already grasped the meaning,

while others are still without it, and the teacher, thanks to these occasional short cuts, will not be compelled to go at the pace of the dumbest pupil in the class. Again, English must be used at times by way of verification, at least in a large class, to find out if some pupil has really understood, and in the earliest stages of grammar it is probably wiser to explain difficulties in English, at the same time giving the French equivalent for the rules, in order to prepare for the ultimate teaching of the grammar in the foreign tongue. One cannot too strongly insist on the absolute need of the class being kept together, and this can only be secured by ascertaining whether the pupils have got clear ideas of the words they are using. Vagueness is fatal to linguistic training. It destroys all the value of the logical discipline. Moreover, when so large a proportion of the lesson is conducted in the medium of the foreign language, a failure to appreciate a single expression is nearly certain to bring about a failure to understand a new phrase in which it is employed as a stepping-stone to further knowledge; and so the *lacunæ* in a backward pupil's mind tend to grow in a geometrical progression. Again, if the foreign

language is too exclusively used, it is far from easy to control the *fainéants*, the shirkers and malingerers. If they profess ignorance of something which they should have already mastered, it is sometimes difficult to bring home to them that the fault is theirs. It is equally difficult to draw the line between culpable laziness and constitutional sluggishness to absorb new data. Hence those who push the new methods to excess are apt to peptonise unduly their teaching, in order to make certain, as far as they can, that the weaker members of the class are taking in what is said. There is thus a distinct danger that the cleverer pupils are not sufficiently drawn out, or are even tempted to perform below their real powers.

More serious from an English point of view is the diminution in the teacher's power to compel pupils to tackle difficult and to them even distasteful problems, though undoubtedly this disciplinary loss is counter-balanced to a certain extent by the increased attractiveness the teacher is obliged to put into his work. Another gain which should be noted is that the teacher is so obliged to keep the attention of the form going that he literally has not the time to take down marks,

much less to maintain the elaborate apparatus of marking so dear to many masters. This is more of an advantage than a disadvantage, for while marks in moderation are an undoubted help by way of stimulus in lower forms, their cult has been pushed to excess in English schools, where they have tended to become an undue burden to masters, and possess the additional defect of displacing the true ideals of learning and adding to the widespread "pot-hunting" spirit exemplified by the craze for prizes and scholarships.

The written work at the outset should be light, consisting mainly of writing out grammatical forms or of simple answers to questions dictated in class or written on the blackboard. All written work should be rigorously controlled. Some of the "new-methodists" profess indifference about the accuracy of written work. A mistake once made on paper is at least quite as difficult to eradicate as a mistake in accent or oral grammar. A certain amount of verse should be learnt by heart. There is no surer help to the rhythm of the language; it is almost indispensable in teaching voice-modulation, stress, and *liaison*. If the verse is printed in phonetic script, as in Professor Spiers' little

book, so much the better. A careful pupil will be all the more able to control and verify his accent by means of such a book if he is given a portion to learn at home—a practice which is certainly to be commended. Another useful home exercise is reading aloud, which is not often set by English teachers, perhaps for the reason that we cannot rely on the English parent looking so closely after the home-work as the French or the German parent.

Speaking generally, it is better that the home-work should consist, in the opening stages, of the revision, either oral or written, of something already done in class, rather than of entirely fresh material. In this way only can we hope to keep down to a minimum the number of mistakes made by the pupils. In the same way, if dictation is given to beginners it should only consist of a passage or of words that the pupils have already seen. In fact, when fresh ground is broken, whether in reading or in the introduction of new phrases, the teacher should always take the lead either by reading over the passage first by himself, or by taking care to pronounce every fresh word that is brought to the notice of the class. He thereby ensures that the first

impression they receive is a correct one. This is all important, as the first impression is always the strongest, and, if false, is therefore the most difficult to eradicate.

So far the teaching in these classes shows a "Left" tendency. But when we come to the vexed question of reading or translation, we at once come to a point on which expert opinion is deeply divided. Some would do translation from the start; others would practise reading without translation for the first year or two. There is much to be said for both parties. Those who use the reader without translation insist that the entire avoidance of translation enormously strengthens the pupil's *Sprachgefühl* for the foreign tongue. The other side admit this to a certain extent, but believe that owing to the far larger amount of ground they are able to cover, the net gain is the same or even larger, especially as they believe that conversation can be more quickly learned in this fashion. They further argue that, owing to the greater pace at which the work is taken, there is less chance of boring the brighter pupils, while at the same time the latter have greater scope for exercising their abilities. Certainly translation allows pupils to read

more bright and idiomatic books from the start—a matter of some importance in French, as any one acquainted with the delightful children's books in that language will readily agree. Pupils brought up on more direct methods apparently require such simplified texts that all the *malice* and *espièglerie* of the language get evaporated off. Probably the best books for translation are those which give illustrations of unusual words in the text, after the fashion of an illustrated dictionary, with footnotes of others, explaining in easier French their precise meaning, such as, *tintamarre* = *grand bruit et désordre*. In this way most of the historical, literary, and other allusions can be explained to the scholar without the intervention of the mother tongue. As for the subject-matter, it should undoubtedly deal with some phase or phases of modern French life. Whether the book be used for reading only or translation, the greatest attention should be paid to the reading aloud, which is often very perfunctorily done in our schools. Above all, the pupil should be encouraged to read with proper emphasis and spirit. When conversation is taught, as it should be, from the reading-book, the following method may be followed with

advantage: The teacher should begin by asking questions the answers to which can be read directly off the book. If the class are quite beginners, to prevent any waste of time by beating about the bush, the teacher should make one of the class translate his question. The answer in French should at once be demanded. If the pupil cannot give this off-hand, let him give his answer, or the first word of it, in English. The number of question-forms is so limited, and the pupils accustom themselves so speedily to this kind of examination, that the method of translating questions or answers can be easily dropped after two or three lessons, and the conversation henceforth will be practically in French. The complete sentence should always be insisted on by way of answer, at any rate at the beginning. No slovenly reply should be accepted. Mistakes should at once be noticed and submitted to the class for correction. The pupils should at first work with their books open, but should be encouraged to answer as far as possible without looking at them. They will soon learn to answer them with their books shut. It cannot be too strongly impressed upon teachers that questions, at least at first, should be

based *on* and not *about* the subject-matter. Supposing there was a sentence which began : "*Une veuve qui avait deux enfants . . .*" a typically right question would be "*Combien d'enfants avait la veuve ?*" a typically wrong one, "*Qu'est-ce que c'est qu'une veuve ?*" From such simple and easy sentences, the answers to which can be read from the book with little or no alteration, the teacher can pass to more general questions, beginning with those whose answers summarise the contents of a sentence of two or three lines, till he arrives at such as summarise the contents of a paragraph. The advantages of the method are many. Questions can be graduated to any degree of difficulty. Under no other system can the teacher ask so many in so short a time. The pupil soon discovers that the method provides the least irksome means of enlarging his vocabulary. Having read and translated the passage, he has the words already floating in his mind ; the method of oral repetition helps to fix them definitely. It is likewise a valuable aid to composition, whether free or other. In reality it is indispensable. The mere fact that the whole conversation, questions and answers alike, is based on the reading-book, safeguards

both master and pupil against falling into a phraseology which is barely French at all.

All these advantages are shared to a certain extent by the system of reading without translating. Where, however, those who practise translation score, is in the far greater speed at which they can teach their pupils vocabulary. While the "direct-methodist" is ringing the changes on some ten phrases which the class has more or less imperfectly mastered, the other teacher could ask at the same time some fifty questions off the reading-book. Now this question of the acquisition of vocabulary is one of capital importance.¹ It ranks equally with pronunciation and grammar. No one can be said to have mastered a language who has not mastered all three. The "direct-methodist," by being obliged to harp on a few phrases at the beginning in order to impress them on the mind of every pupil in a class of (say) twenty boys, certainly runs a risk of unduly retarding the acquisition of vocabulary. Were the time assigned to modern languages in the school practically unlimited, the question of

¹ This point is very fully recognised in the series of French and German texts edited by Mr. Siepmann for Macmillan, in which also a strong feature is made of retranslation.

the speed at which vocabulary is acquired would be less pressing. Unfortunately the time allotted to these studies is very limited indeed. We have therefore to make the utmost of the time allotted and adopt all sorts of time-saving devices, as long as they do not reduce the teaching to mere mechanical cram. As Dr. Breul well says in his book on the teaching of modern languages, the problem is, What can be done in a limited number of hours with children? One of the most important things is to organise and correlate as much as possible the groups of words to be learnt. This is already a common practice with the "new-methodists," who start their pupils on the study not of isolated sentences, but of a connected story or theme. The isolated sentence of the Ollendorffian type is fatal to the prospects of interest, and without interest teaching cannot succeed. Such sentences as "Have you the boots of my aunt?"—"No, but I have the boots of your uncle," are beyond even the realm of make-believe. Otherwise the system of question and answer is sound enough, and has been retained by the modern teacher. Again, the use already alluded to of pictures in which certain phenomena that occur together are

grouped in a single illustration is another useful device, provided that it is looked on as a device, or rather as one device out of several and not as the one unique, indispensable way of acquiring a foreign language. Skilfully constructed dialogues in which certain groups of words relating (say) to the family are introduced are a valuable aid, but they must be carefully confined to the commoner words, or that thirst for completeness which made the ancient grammarians carefully collect all the irregular plurals like *travaux* and *ciels* will reappear in the inclusion of such far-fetched relationships as "my maternal great-aunt" or "my second cousin once removed." Another valuable aid is the practice of word-building, whether in forming adjectives from nouns or substantives from verbs, or *vice versa*. German especially lends itself to this exercise. Take, for instance, the word *sitzen*, as quoted by Breul, with its numerous kith and kin, many of them some of the commonest words in the language, such as *setzen*, *Sitzung*, *Satzung*, *Sitz*, *Satz* (with its relations by marriage *Aufsatz*, *Einsatz*, *Vorsatz*, *Absatz*), *aufsitzen*, *absitzen*, *Besitzung*, *Besatzung*, *Besetzung*, *Versetzung*, etc. Of course with beginners one would not

inflict on them all at once this lengthy pedigree, which would, in some of its parts, be quite as unintelligible as the collateral branches in a family tree, but one could certainly introduce them to the better known members of the genealogy and encourage them to add perpetually to it any fresh members of the clan as they came across them. Nothing helps to give the pupils a better notion of the intense plasticity of language than this practice of word-formation. It also goes far to disabuse them of the wooden and rigid notion they are apt to conceive of it, if taught to observe by the eye all the so-called irregularities in the language, many of which are merely irregularities in spelling and not in form, like the French plurals in *x* and other trivialities. For other devices, such as the learning of synonyms and their opposites, the practice of giving simple paraphrases for harder words or of requiring answers to incomplete sentences of the missing-word type, one may find them worked out in detail in most of the books devoted to the teaching of the reformed method. Again, in the higher classes the methods of comparative etymology may often be utilised with advantage.

But the problem of the acquisition of an adequate vocabulary does not end here. We need in fact in every language, be it the mother tongue or a foreign language, two sorts of vocabulary, one consisting of words we use, and the other, a far larger one, of words which we understand or see in print, but rarely, if ever, employ in writing or conversation. Thus the ordinary educated Englishman who is not a writer or public speaker probably uses about five thousand words, and knows by sight at least ten or fifteen thousand more. The "new-methodist," who is rather apt to ram and cram into the speaking vocabulary of the pupil every word he comes across, either puts off till too late the acquisition of this second kind of vocabulary, or else by allowing his pupils to read texts in which he has not the time to ensure their getting a clear notion of the meaning of each word, encourages in them a certain vagueness and indefiniteness of conception which is detrimental to clear thinking.

After two or three years, if not sooner, it is extremely desirable that the reader should be definitely exchanged for a work or selections from some modern author, which should

remain the centre of instruction. Some persons at this stage prefer to have two readers—one to be studied slowly and thoroughly for translation, grammar, and composition, the other to be read aloud rapidly in order to give the pupils a real taste of the language.¹ Such a system would combine the advantages of the two methods described above. Meanwhile the composition, which in its earlier stages consisted of the copying out of grammar forms, the answering of simple questions in French based on the text, or the turning into French of simple English sentences more or less of the nature of retranslation, should have grown and expanded into free composition on the text largely aided by the conversational method detailed above, varied by retranslation on a still larger scale. If original composition is attempted, it should be but seldom, and should take the form of a letter on some subject which has been thoroughly talked over by the teacher and the class together; otherwise the pupils will begin to cut their canine teeth in French—a

¹ The series of cheap texts containing enough matter to be read through in a term, such as those of Messrs. Blackie, are a real boon to parents to whom their children's terminal book-bill is a serious item.

process which is always to be avoided if possible. The only allowable exception, on account of its advantages in encouraging personal initiative is participation in international correspondence. If the teacher is energetic, he can easily find foreign correspondents for the whole of his form, as there is always a majority of would-be writers unpaired on the other side of the Channel. Those who desire to learn more about the system, or to be put into communication with a foreigner, either pupil or adult, may obtain the necessary information by writing to Miss Lawrence, at the *Review of Reviews*, Mowbray House, Norfolk Street, Strand, W.C.

So far we have assumed that French is and ought to be the first language to be studied. French is studied in England in comparison with German in the proportion of at least five to one. In Wales it is still greater (5506 French papers to some 42 German in the last but one Central Welsh Board Examination). Some people are asking at the present time whether we should not rather begin with German. Those who favour German urge that owing to its accent, intonation, spelling, which is largely phonetic, and its

greater kinship with English,¹ as far as common everyday words are concerned, it is an easier language for beginners than French. In intonation, accent, and spelling it is undoubtedly easier, though the question of accent for young children with their flexible voice-organs is not so formidable as for those who are older. The advantage in word-relationship largely depends on the age of the learner and the vocabulary he has already acquired. The English boy of nine or ten who has already learned to read probably finds as many related words in French as in German. On the other hand German, with its more abundant inflexions, its numerous inversions, and its complicated word-order, is far harder for the pupil who goes any distance into the language. One writer claims that we have most to learn from Germany "in the region of science, philosophy, theology, in matters educational, commercial, and military."

¹ This statement has lately been seriously challenged, and seems destined to be entirely refuted in the near future. M. Derocquigny, of the University of Lille, has lately published a most interesting monograph based largely on the labours of the compilers of the *New English Dictionary*, in which very strong evidence is brought forward to show that while Anglo-Saxon is the connecting tissue of our language, the backbone of our everyday vocabulary is Norman-French.

This is rather a large order. German is certainly necessary, or rather desirable, for those who engage in research in any of these subjects, but the output of France in original investigation is by no means to be despised, and what the French have contributed on these subjects possesses at least the merit of intelligibility. Besides, the great majority of these subjects lie entirely outside the school curriculum, and such knowledge as is required for reading an author or a technical subject can be easily got later. The difficulty for the adult is not so much a difficulty of grammar as of technical vocabulary to be acquired, which in any case cannot be acquired at school. Again, if philosophy is to be taught as a school subject—and there is much to be said in its favour—we must look to France and not to Germany. In France it has been long one of the best taught subjects in school, whereas it is practically unknown in German schools. In fact the lack of not only philosophy, but of philosophical treatment of subjects in the higher classes is recognised as a burning question even by the authorities themselves. If commercial reasons are to be taken into consideration, the balance of advantage is on the side of France,

for whereas our trade with the two countries and their dependencies is about equal, the ignorance of English which exists in France in comparison with Germany renders it far more important for our young traders to learn French. Supposing, however, that the *pros* are on the side of German, there are still two reasons which should make us decide in favour of French. One is that, as a preparatory study to Latin, German, in spite of its inflexions and word-order, cannot compare with French, which is the direct descendant of the Latin language. The other reason is that as a descendant of not only Latin but Greek culture, French with its unrivalled lucidity offers a far greater field for literary training and culture, supplying us with just that practice in clear and logical thought which we as a nation lack. A mechanical imitation of the laborious industry of the Germans would be a poor substitute for what French offers us. If, as the case often occurs, pupils have only time to study one language, one cannot help feeling that the language with which pupils start should be French.

II.

THE adoption of French in preference to German as the first modern language to be studied does not imply that these two modern languages should be studied to the exclusion of all others. Italian might very well be taken up as a second language in some girls' schools, while Spanish in certain towns has even stronger claims. Liverpool and Swansea, to mention no others, do a large and increasing trade both with the Spanish-speaking countries of South America and with Spain itself. Except for the extra cost of providing an additional teacher in Spanish, there seems no reason why the latter should not in such cases be treated as an alternative second language. A more important question is whether in such cases one should not make a non-romance language like German the premier language for those who take Spanish in order to prevent their studying two

languages of the same family. Such an arrangement would mean of course a bifurcation in modern languages down to the very bottom of the school, with a corresponding increase in the staff.

But the question of which modern language should be studied first is really bound up with a far larger one—the relation of classics to modern languages in classical and semi-classical schools. As things are at present in England, Latin is in many schools often commenced simultaneously with French, with the result that the latter is rarely treated at any stage with the seriousness it deserves. Again, in some schools we find boys of twelve doing three languages simultaneously (Greek, Latin, and French), and boys of sixteen doing even a fourth—German. Certain reforms are obviously needed. Under the present system too many languages are studied together, while the wastage among boys receiving a classical or even semi-classical education is undoubtedly very large compared with what goes on in classical schools abroad. Is it possible in any way so to organise the selection as to reduce the percentage of waste-products to a more moderate figure? Compulsory Greek at the two older universities is no doubt

responsible for the study of Greek by a certain proportion of boys, who derive no benefit from this forced labour they are obliged to contribute to please the *grands seigneurs* of some of our big public schools, but compulsory Greek in itself need not be an absolute bar to reform. The situation would be profoundly modified if we could shift the period at which it should be taken up to a later date. An experiment has for some time been going on in Germany which has lately been copied to some extent by French reformers. In both countries certain definite curricula have been evolved. Those in Germany number three and in France four. In Germany they take the three forms of classical, semi-classical, and modern, the latter being rather of a literary than a scientific type. In France the four curricula comprise the full classical, the Latin-modern languages, the Latin-science and the science-modern languages. Some sort of similar arrangement and grouping appears to be contemplated by the English Board of Education in the near future. The regulations of a year ago for secondary schools prefigured an ultimate classification under three types, classical, literary, and scientific. In Germany the work is so arranged that pupils who

stay till the age of 16 obtain a complete education of a kind, though the full course is for pupils of 19. In France the full course is at least a year shorter, but there is likewise a break in the middle of the course at which boys of 14 may leave, having received an education which is complete in itself. In England, according to the above-mentioned regulations, the leaving age may be 16, 17, or 18 to 19. This does not seem to allow for the framing of such a scientific curriculum in the upper classes as obtains in either French or German schools; this, however, is not so important as the present crying need for our schools to provide something of the nature of a complete curriculum up to 16, whether or no it is afterwards prolonged beyond that date.

So far we have, at least on paper, a classification of schools in England roughly similar, though by no means identical, with the differentiation which distinguishes the French and German systems. But here the likeness ends. The four parallel courses in France each allow of admission to the University for all the faculties. That is to say, neither Greek nor even Latin is compulsory for entrance. The semi-classical and even the modern course in

Germany admit their duly qualified "alumni" to several though not all the faculties. What is more important, however, is the rearrangement that has taken place in the teaching of modern languages in certain carefully selected schools, whereby all boys, whatever course they may ultimately adopt, can be educated together till the age of 12, while the choice again between a full classical and semi-classical course is sometimes postponed from 12 till 14. Something similar has been adopted in France, but as the French reform is comparatively recent, we will leave out of account what is being done in that country and merely describe the German experiment. The pupil, as heretofore, can enter the secondary school at the age of 9. He has already been educated in a *Vorschule* (preparatory school) or *Volkschule* (elementary school). He has been receiving a careful grounding in the mother tongue, and this is continued throughout the whole of his school course. On entrance he takes up French, which he studies intensively for three years. He can then either enter the classical school, which may be under the same roof, but is quite distinct, and for two years may study Latin in the same intensive fashion, or

he may enter the purely modern side, in which he will take up the study of a second foreign language—English. Once Latin is begun by the classical boy, French naturally takes second rank. From six hours a week for the first three years it falls to three, while the Latin begins with ten hours a week for boys who are later on to take up Greek and eight hours a week for those who will subsequently take up English. But in some schools, notably at Hanover, the bifurcation between the full classical and semi-classical courses is delayed till the age of 14. Greek when begun at that age is pushed in the same intensive fashion, eight hours a week being devoted to it for four years, while English in semi-classical schools receives six hours a week during the year it is first introduced. This intensive study represents a saving of time at both ends. Taking the whole course we find that thirty-six hours were devoted to Greek under the old system against thirty-two as at present, and sixty-three to Latin as against fifty-one. Again, in the Realgymnasium or semi-classical school the Latin hours have sunk from forty-three to thirty-nine or thirty-seven. Yet I have been personally assured by teachers that the standard ultimately

attained by the pupils is just as high in the new schools as in the old. When the pupils tackle Latin under the new conditions, they have already acquired a large amount of linguistic instinct and knack from their intensive study of French; they are also older. Cæsar at 12 has not the same terror as Cæsar at 9. Again, they feel less non-plussed at the start than those who have never seen a foreign language before; they progress more rapidly, and are more sensible of the progress they are making. They realise to a certain extent what they are aiming at. This consciousness of winning a certain mastery over the language has an immense effect on the *moral* of their work. Moreover the study of the language being spread over a less number of years diminishes the danger of the boys becoming stale and sick of the endless gerund-grinding. Put briefly, then, this Frankfort method, as it is called from having been first tried at Frankfort, insists on the importance of the mother tongue as the basis and *point de départ* of all linguistic study, on the taking up of the easier language before the harder, *i.e.* of French before Latin, and the intensive study of each language as it is taken up, and finally,

on the postponement of the study of a second or third language until such a time as a certain mastery has been obtained over the language last taken up. Its benefits include the putting off of the choice between a classical or modern education till the age of 12 instead of 9, and again between a full classical and a semi-classical from the age of 12 to 14. The experiment in an older form, which is gradually being superseded, dates back to 1878, but in its present shape is only about 14 years old. Yet at the beginning of 1904 there were already sixty-two so-called reformed schools in Germany with many thousands of pupils in them. The number is growing every day, and the rate of growth looks like being still more rapid; as the headmaster who inaugurated the reform has just been taken into the Education Office, a sure sign that the Government intend to proceed with the reconstruction of the old-fashioned schools as speedily as they can. Such a reform on similar though not necessarily identical lines is almost essential in England, if the teaching of modern languages is to be properly organised in our various categories of secondary schools. It will probably be difficult to induce the bigger public schools

to budge from their present position. But if the larger authorities throughout the country would decide that all municipal and aided schools should put the experiment into practice the others would probably sooner or later follow suit.

Professor Sadler felt so strongly on the subject that in his report on the Liverpool Schools he added an appendix on the postponement of Latin till 12 years of age, from which the following extract is taken :

“ A great obstacle to the co-ordination of the curricula of the elementary and secondary schools is formed by the early commencement of Latin in many secondary schools for boys. This is partly due to tradition, partly to the influence of the scholarship and entrance examinations at the great public schools, which set a fashion that is widely followed. During recent years much experience has been gained as to the result of postponing Latin till 12 years of age. The success, in classical studies, of many girls who began Latin late has helped to draw attention to the subject. The evil effects of stunting instruction in the mother tongue, in elementary science, and in manual work by assigning an undue importance to Latin and to Greek

in the preparatory years of boys' secondary education, have further emphasised its importance. The problems involved have been faced in some English and in many German secondary schools. The results of the experiments so made have been so striking that mention should be made of them here. At the boys' Grammar Schools at Bristol, Blackburn, and Leeds, and at Hymer's College, Hull, it has been found that the late beginning of Latin has not been detrimental, in the case of clever and industrious boys, to their prospects of attaining a high level of classical attainment. It is in Germany, however, that the closest attention has been given of late to the various bearings of this important question. The experiment of postponing to the age of 12 the commencement of Latin in a boys' secondary school has been tried at Frankfort since 1892. The results have been highly satisfactory. In 1900 the Royal Decree relating to secondary schools in Prussia recognised the value of the new experiment, and recommended its continuance and more extended adoption."

But there is yet another lion in the path that bars the way to a proper development of a well thought out curriculum in modern

languages which shall combine the advantages of the new with the old. The obstacle in question is the existence of a number of external examinations which practically dictate what the teaching shall be for all boys between the ages of 14 and 19. While the examinations have undoubtedly a levelling-up effect on the work of backward and struggling schools, they have a tendency to hamper and discourage experiment in the larger and more progressive, thereby fostering cram and tending to stereotype the teaching. Both directly and indirectly they affect the teaching of modern languages. They directly affect it, because in the majority of cases the examination dictates what the teaching should be rather than the teaching the nature of the examination. Indirectly they affect it, because owing to the multiplicity of subjects in which examination is required, sufficient time cannot always be given to modern languages. Their just claims to a fair share of the pupil's work are hampered by the necessity of his spending an undue amount on an excessive number of examination subjects. Inside the school, again, the diversity of public entrance examinations breaks up the collective work of pupils at the top of the school, and thereby

seriously impairs what ought to be the most valuable years in their school career. Yet it must not be supposed that examinations in themselves are an unmixed evil. On the contrary they are obviously necessary as an independent audit of the work of the school. They are also useful in providing a stimulus to pupils and teachers, while in proportion as the certificates gained in them are appreciated by employers they create a valuable link between the school and the business world. The question therefore is, how can we maintain them and at the same time eliminate their evil effects? The most effective reform would of course be the institution of a leaving certificate on the lines laid down by the Consultative Committee, or if that were not immediately practicable, by a large extension of the principle of equivalence, which has been recognised already to a certain degree by the numerous professional bodies, such as the Law Society and others, which have each established their own preliminary examination. The same principle has quite recently received a considerable impetus by the joint agreement of London, Oxford, and Cambridge to recognise mutually, with certain reservations, as equivalents their several entrance examinations.

This of course should do away with a good many of the present disabilities, more especially if, in the case of modern languages, an oral test were made obligatory to the passing of the examination in French or German, as is indeed proposed in the draft scheme of the Consultative Committee for a leaving certificate. At present an oral test is optional in the examinations conducted by the Joint Board and by the Cambridge Locals Syndicate. The latter body has made a further advance by recently extending its oral tests to any candidates in the junior examination who desire to take them. Again, in the papers set in these examinations a great improvement has been made of recent years. The old grammatical "chestnuts" have largely disappeared. We no longer meet with those hoary conundrums such as the reason for the omission of the *e* in *grand'mere*, which was never there, or the plural of double-barrelled nouns like *garde-chasse*, over which grammarians have squabbled from time immemorial, or the out of the way plurals of *ciel* or of *pou* (a word now happily no longer mentioned among Christians). Again, provision has been made for free composition, and more modern authors have been adopted for study in those cases in

which set books are still retained. We may reasonably hope to live to see examination papers of which not only the questions are in French, but the answers will be expected to be in French also—a practice which I do not think has got beyond the examination of individual schools. Still the one drawback remains that when many schools are examined by one paper, it must be rather general to the whole than adapted to the curriculum of one particular school.

Another objection also is urged against those examinations which take place during the stay of the pupil at school. It is pointed out that the French *lycée* or *collège* and the German Gymnasium or Oberrealschule are entirely free from external examination in the intermediate years of the scholar's life. There are of course in these countries internal examinations, supplemented by inspection. Until lately, however, we have had little that resembled the German system. The Joint Board system of inspectional papers, in which the papers are marked by the staff and revised by the outside examiner, recalls the German methods to a certain extent, especially when the papers are set by the staff. But the system is never applied to the higher classes, in which

alone it is found in Germany. The truth is, there is still great reluctance to throw the responsibility on the school staff of deciding on the capabilities of their pupils, nor are English masters as a rule desirous to accept a position which, in their eyes, may easily become invidious.

Happily a system has recently been introduced by London University, and to a certain extent by the older Universities, which meets the above objection. I refer to the system of having a school certificate, of which the best known is probably the London. It has encountered a certain amount of criticism and undergone in consequence a certain amount of modification, but the principle embodied in the scheme seems right enough. Inspection is the main thing, and examination is regarded as one of the means at the disposal of the inspector for verifying the work. To have thus shifted the centre of gravity from examination to inspection indicates a great gain. It is a first step towards recognising that public bodies must take cognisance of the teaching itself as well as of its immediate results, which, after all, are only symptoms of the goodness or badness of the teaching. The mere fact that candidates are obliged to

have pursued an approved course of study for a period of years at a school under inspection approved by the University shows that the question of curriculum, and so *a fortiori* of properly graded courses in French and German, is made a special object of inquiry. The difference here is nothing less than that between testing cram and testing education, attention being directed not so much to a single result, which is always more or less artificial, as to the whole process of instruction.

So far the schools have been as a rule allowed to pick and choose the particular examining body which suits their taste. Naturally the big public schools will exercise the same freedom of choice as heretofore, as will also the State-aided schools. But in the case of the rate-aided or municipal schools it seems possible that the local authority may insist on selecting the particular University they think fit to conduct the examination. For instance in a place like Liverpool the Education Committee would very likely arrange that the rate-aided or municipal schools should be examined and inspected by Liverpool University.

It seems probable as time goes on that this method of inspecting and examining individual

schools will grow, as far as modern languages are concerned, for the simple reason that pupils trained on the direct method have in the earlier stages no knowledge of the language outside the particular vocabulary of the book they may be using, and so different are the books at present, that it would be quite easy to set a thoroughly elementary paper to pupils trained on these lines which would completely "plough" the whole class owing to the words employed not being contained in their own particular book.

Supposing, then, that something of the nature of the Frankfort method were introduced into our schools and the present restrictions produced by examinations were reduced to a minimum, what should be the ideal of modern language teaching in the higher forms?

Now this particular stage, which I would call the second stage, of the curriculum has so far scarcely received from the reformers the attention it deserved. Thus in Jespersen's admirable book on *How to Teach a Foreign Language* some 178 pages are devoted to the teaching of beginners and only 14 to the secondary stage. The fault, if fault there be, is due to the fact that their energies so far

have been absorbed by the struggle to make their ideas accepted in the schools. Here in England the subject has scarcely been discussed. Mr. Kirkman has indeed read a paper on the subject at the College of Preceptors (see *Educational Times* for January 1905), and recently the present writer has contributed a short article for the new pedagogical section of the *Modern Language Quarterly* urging the Association to make the matter the subject of inquiry by a special committee, after a preliminary discussion on the question by teachers and others interested in the subject. I think that in this matter we shall get most hints from the curricula of the German schools, especially those of the Realgymnasium, the Realschule, and the Oberrealschule, in which the idea has been largely worked out. What we want is a definite pronouncement on the aim and methods to be followed during the second stage, and suggested lists of authors to be read in the different classes, for pupils in either second-grade or first-grade secondary schools of the different types. We want, in fact, a regular *catalogue raisonné* which is neither a mere superficial undigested bibliography of books to pick and choose from, nor a rigidly

prescribed course of books which all the schools in the country have to follow. With such a comparative liberty of choice we shall avoid the evils entailed in all the secondary schools of the country being compelled to read a single set of authors; on the other hand we shall provide such a latitude of liberty as to allow the ordinary headmaster so to select his authors as to combine and co-ordinate them, if he will, with the other subjects in the curriculum. To take a couple of instances by way of example, he may wish to read Corneille's "Cid" and Shakespeare's "Coriolanus" together, or again some authors on the French Revolution while the class is studying either the history of the English Revolution of 1642 or of the period 1789-1805. Again, of course, the solution of the problem must necessarily vary with the nature of the school. Let us take, to begin with, the first-grade schools—those in fact in which the leaving age is 18 to 19. In a classical school of this type probably only one modern language can be taken up, though of course the sixth form boys might learn a little German, sufficient to enable them to read the language for the sake of independent study and original research, whether in classics or some other

Fach. But it is manifest that in the classical school, with the introduction of first Latin and then Greek, the teaching in French cannot be developed beyond a good working knowledge of the language. In a school where Latin is the only classical language a further extension can be given to French, and German too can be thoroughly studied ; while in the so-called scientific school French, either with or without German, will have to bear the brunt of supporting the literary side of the curriculum, and therefore must evidently be studied in still greater detail than in the other schools. A good instance of the different extent to which French should be studied in these schools of varying type may be obtained by a comparison of the different aims of the teaching of the same subjects as defined by the Prussian Ministry in the programme for the Gymnasium, Realgymnasium, and Oberrealschule respectively. For the Gymnasium it is laid down that the object in view for the pupil in French should be to understand the most important writings of the last three centuries, and to gain some degree of facility in the practical, oral, and written use of the language. The aim of the Realgymnasium is rather more

extended. To the former definition is added some knowledge of the chief chapters in the literary and real life of the French people, and finally for the Oberrealschule the aim is to be the same, plus "an insight into the grammatical system of the language."

Passing, then, from the first-grade schools, we come to those in which the leaving age is supposed to be 17. This seems to be too much of a "betwixt and between" age to allow any clear idea to be formed of a distinct curriculum being constructed for such schools intermediate between that of schools where the leaving age is 16 and that of schools in which the leaving age is 19. The Board of Education has so far given no clear idea of what the difference would be between a school of this kind and the schools just above and below it. The only similar school we can think of is the German Progymnasium, which appears to be going out of favour. We will therefore pass at once to what used to be called the second-grade schools, in which the leaving age is somewhere about 16. If the first-grade schools are wise they will so arrange their curricula that there would be a natural break at 16, which would correspond with the leaving age of the second-grade

schools; then if a boy wanted to come on to them from one of these lower schools, the transition for him to the higher would be very easy. But—and this is more important—the first-grade schools have a large contingent who usually leave at 16. By arranging for a first break in the curriculum at 16, such schools will ensure that the boys who leave at that age will leave with a compact, if smaller, amount of knowledge, which is not a fragment but a whole in itself. In the case of such pupils from the first-grade schools and of the great majority from the others the third language would only have been studied for a couple of years; yet the standard attained would be satisfactory. Progress must necessarily be more and more rapid as each successive language is taken up. With the growth of linguistic experience the “attack,” so to say, must come easier at the second time of asking and still easier at the third, inasmuch as the methods followed will be largely the same in each case. As for the methods themselves we may lay down that the reading-book, as before, should be the centre of instruction, but, as the pupils proceed, the bias given to the teaching should be more and more literary in the true sense of

the word. Thus with pupils of 16 and upwards Racine and Corneille, so out of place in the lower classes, should now be studied rather than second-rate modern novels. Such pupils should be able to appreciate the fine literary flavour of these classic authors, having by this time become possessed of a standard of comparison through their acquisition of the modern idiom. The reading of selections and snippets should be reduced to a minimum. Authors should be read in large quantities, or in works complete in themselves, such as poems and plays. The teaching should, as far as possible, be conducted in the foreign medium. Grammar should not be pushed to excess, nor its modern supplanter, philology, though a little handbook on historical grammar would not be out of place. But the instruction should be, above all, literary and critical. It should include discussions on the subject-matter of (say) the play the class is studying, with an analysis of the plot, of the principal characters, and of the stage-craft displayed by the writer, dealing with such questions as why such and such a person or incident is introduced. These matters might also be utilised as materials for original composition. That parasite of modern educa-

tion, the annotated edition, should be, as far as possible, dispensed with. Instead of studying a poem or play as an artistic and literary whole, the pupil has his attention perpetually called off and distracted by some footnote of fifth rate importance, while his taste and judgment are formed in advance for him by the critical appreciations prefixed to the text. What external information is required should be supplied by the teacher, or be hunted up by the pupils themselves in the reference library of the school. Alongside of the comparatively careful study of some classical masterpiece, the pupils should employ for rapid reading a play by the same writer, or by one of the same, or even a later, epoch, which would afford scope and subject-matter for comparisons and contrasts, while the writings of some great French critic on the author in question might be simultaneously studied. At the same time certain modern standard authors could be recommended for home reading. In the highest class an introduction might be made to the study of philosophy by reading in class Descartes' *Discours de la méthode*, or some of Pascal's works.

In certain cases those boys who desired to

specialise in commercial French or German without going to a technical school might be drafted in their last year into a commercial class. The general opinion seems to be that such work is well within the province of a big school. A commercial reader will probably give a sufficient commercial vocabulary to a pupil already well grounded in French,¹ while it is considered by several competent critics that a boy should stay on and secure the benefits of corporate life that a school gives rather than that he should finish in a regular school of commerce.

Finally, what should be the apportionment of hours in the higher stage for French and German? In the purely classical school we can scarcely expect more than three periods a week, and in the highest class certainly not more than two; but one period a week, except for the sake of learning (say) German with a view to reading one's authorities in it, is not worth having. In the semi-classical we may expect a more liberal allowance with anything from three to five periods for French and four

¹ It is considered by more than one competent authority that in the case of boys who had received a thorough grounding in the foreign language, commercial correspondence proper is best learnt in actual practice.

to six for the second language as soon as it is taken up. In those science schools in which only one language is taken up we may well demand a steady five to six periods a week. Of course in many cases these periods would be only fifty minutes or even shorter, but frequency in lessons, unless they are altogether too short, is more important than length. Four lessons of three-quarters of an hour each per week are far more valuable than three periods of an hour. In boarding schools with their longer hours the number of periods might well be increased. In girls' schools, in which the time allotted to work is shorter, we can hardly expect so many periods, or at any rate quite such a large allotment of time. The German programme (see Appendix A), while containing more hours than the ordinary English, will give a very good notion of the proportion of time to be assigned to modern languages in a well balanced curriculum. As for English schools, one can only say that everything so far is in a state of uncertainty. We have at present local option in the making of time-tables, rendered more elastic by the recent diminution in the hours given to science, which still in some schools takes the lion's share.

This, then, brings us to the end of the curriculum as far as the secondary schools are concerned, but it still remains to point out and emphasise the numerous factors which must be taken into account if such a curriculum is to have fair play.

But before embarking on this subject, it is necessary to say a few words on the teaching of modern languages elsewhere than in secondary schools. It will be observed that nowhere has an attempt been made to draw a line between the teaching of modern languages in primary and secondary schools. I have purposely abstained from doing so, because I am convinced that wherever the study of them may be commenced, whether in the primary or secondary school, the beginnings should be largely similar. But I am well aware that some teachers (the case is not confined to primary) have only an imperfect knowledge of French and a still more imperfect accent. In such cases I am afraid it is better to give up the new method and to teach more or less on the old lines, because in such instances, should the children later on come under better teachers, they will have less to unlearn either in the shape of dog French or a pidgin accent. Personally

I think every teacher, whether in a primary or a secondary school, who takes the subject ought to be officially examined before being allowed to teach on the direct method, and that the extent of such permission should be defined. When, however, there are more than one teacher of the subject, headmasters can do a good deal by entrusting the beginners to the best teacher. Even if they later on come under a weaker teacher, they can be ultimately restored to something like their first state. A good beginning furnishes a foundation on which one can subsequently build, but those who are badly grounded have neither knowledge nor accent on which to build, but are rather like a site which has been ruined by putting in the wrong sort of foundation. Of course in higher elementary schools in which the aim of the school is quasi-utilitarian the teaching should be distinctly practical. As the Memorandum in 1903 of the Scottish Education Department in the curricula of higher grade schools or departments well says, "The object and method of the instruction in languages must in all cases be practical, and whatever method may be pursued in the beginning, the result at the end of the course should be that the pupils are able to read

simple narratives in the language at sight and to understand and reproduce both orally and in writing the substance of a conversation on everyday topics or a simple description. *Unless there is a reasonable probability of this object being attained the subject should not be attempted."*

One may further add that the teaching of French and German in the highest class may also assume a commercial cast. In municipal schools of commerce it will also be naturally utilitarian, except when the standard of general attainment is so high that some attempt is made to study the economics of the foreign country in its own tongue. But in this case the linguistic study of the language ceases to be an end in itself and becomes a mere means and instrument for unlocking the secrets contained in the foreign medium, and is thus exactly on a par with the very useful smattering of German that the sixth form or science boy acquires with a view to reading the original authorities of his special subject in the foreign language. Of modern languages as taught in evening classes the standard does not usually appear to be high. It does not seem probable that the student who has had but little grounding can effect much in a single

session, especially as he often comes to his work tired and jaded. As a rule he studies the subject for commercial purposes. From what small experience I have had of evening classes I imagine it would probably be best for the beginner to take, for one session at least, a course in oral French of a general kind, with translation and composition, and then specialise in the second or better still in the third session. The Liverpool evening classes in modern languages are in fact divided up into three stages, elementary, intermediate, and advanced. The comparatively low standard of modern-language teaching in evening schools is not an isolated phenomenon; it depends very largely on the general conditions that control the present state of these schools. In his report on Liverpool Professor Sadler devotes the greater part of a whole chapter to the discussion of the present low efficiency of evening schools in Liverpool and in England generally, diagnoses the weak spots, and makes certain sweeping suggestions for the improvement of the whole system. He attributes their somewhat unsatisfactory condition to three causes, acting and reacting upon one another. In the first place much of the instruction given is very rudimentary, and

as a result there can be little real grading of instruction. The continuation schools are largely devoted to the recovery of the work which has been done once in the elementary schools; the continuation work proper intrudes into the commercial and technical centres, and no small part of the instruction given in the Municipal Technical School is elementary both in name and in nature. The second cause of ineffectiveness is the very poor attendance of many of the students. Professor Sadler points out that the average attendance of men in Liverpool continuation schools is barely 50 per cent and of women 61 per cent. Moreover the perpetual dropping out of students leads to an incessant rearrangement of classes, whereby two skeleton contingents are brigaded under a single teacher, with the result that half the pupils have to connect on as well as they can their previous knowledge to the new method of teaching: a serious matter in modern-language teaching, when any change in the gauge of teaching is always disconcerting even for the best pupils. Professor Sadler rightly declares that a certain amount of the falling off is due to legitimate reasons—illness, change of residence, rush of business, but still he cannot avoid the conclusion that “carelessness and

indifference" have a good deal to do with it. His third reason is the prevalent habit of preparing for the certificates awarded by the various bodies which examine the pupils attending these schools. He clearly considers that in this certificate hunting the losses counterbalance the gains. He then passes to the remedies, the first of which is to grade the schools and distribute them better from a geographical standpoint. Still more important is his suggestion, from the standpoint of effective teaching in modern languages, that these outlying continuation schools should be kept strictly to continuation work, while the higher work is to be reserved for the higher technical school (or as far as languages are concerned, for its commercial departments). Another important suggestion which must indirectly affect the efficiency of modern-language teaching is his plea for liberalising and harmonising the curriculum by providing really stimulating instruction in English literature, supplemented by first-rate teaching in geography and history. He is further in favour of definite courses of work with reasonable options and a proper amount of home work. He also advocates higher fees for advanced work, and suggests the segregation of adults

and school children. He rightly points out that not merely in Liverpool but in England generally the evening school system is passing through a rather discouraging period in its history. At the same time he is careful to insist on its moral and economic importance. The people's high schools have invigorated the national life of Denmark. Continuation schools are doing a great work in Germany. Just now it is slack water, but a self-governing nation needs good evening schools, because they provide what is really a form of secondary education for the masses of the people. Professor Sadler expects that great improvements will follow, once we reduce the number of children in the big classes in our elementary schools. The pupil will thereby have a chance of learning how to study on his own account, and will thus come to the continuation school with a greater thirst and aptitude for knowledge. He also thinks the movement among employers to give their apprentices and others time off for attendance at professional schools may do much, and thirdly, he is in favour of compulsory attendance at evening schools for two nights a week during the winter months for each of the two years immediately following the day course. This of course would do

more than anything else to make the evening school what it ought to be, the logical outcome of the elementary, and would greatly conduce to the proper organisation of optional courses, in which modern languages when studied would be studied on systematic lines.

Of the teaching of modern languages at pupil teacher centres little need be said beyond emphasising the need of new methods here as elsewhere. So far as I am acquainted with these establishments the teaching of this particular subject seems to be terribly hampered by the multiplicity of subjects the pupils have to take up. The only thing that the authorities at present can do is to see that such centres are staffed with specially picked teachers. Various changes have recently been made in the teaching of French and German in Training Colleges which have facilitated the introduction of new methods, but the number of the students who take these subjects is still adversely affected by the extra premium which the authorities receive on account of students who take science. The practice of allowing a limited number of training college students to pass their third year abroad is an excellent move in the right direction.

III

WE are now free to pass to the discussion of the numerous factors connected with the realisation of the programme we have already outlined. Some of these have been already more or less touched upon. They will, however, be treated separately in order to give them their proper focus and proportion.

1. Allusion has already been made to the need of making the mother tongue the basis of all linguistic instruction. To show how this may be done seems highly important here, even if the exposition must be exceedingly brief, firstly, because there is a large school in England who are still convinced that English is better learnt through the medium of a foreign language, and who therefore contest the proposition altogether; secondly, because unless English is taught on modern lines, the whole subsequent teaching will suffer from faulty grounding in what should

have been the fundamental language. It is only the fear of making the subject too wide, or rather too long, that has caused me to interpret the title "the teaching of modern languages" in the narrow sense of the word, because after all even our classical friends can hardly deny that English is a *modern* language, however much they may attempt to teach it on classical lines. It is possible, however, that they may accuse us of a paradox by saying—"You talk of the knowledge of one language being the basis or *point de départ* of the study of another, yet you steadily rule out as far as possible a use of the first language as soon as you come to the study of the second, whereas we freely avail ourselves of English when we begin the study of Latin. Put in that fashion it would seem that the preliminary study of English is far less valuable to the modern language pupil than to the student of Latin. But the whole point of one language being a stepping stone to another from our point of view does not lie in the study of the vocabulary but of the structure. If a pupil has become familiar with the simple notions of nouns and adjectives, subject and object (to mention no others), in one language, when he proceeds to the

study of another he brings with him certain valuable tools and instruments that have already been sharpened by his experience of the first language. But even this is hardly so important as similarity in method, such as practice in the teaching of reading, or of grammar, or of composition. The pupil who has had some training, however slight, in one language, is already accustomed to the ways of linguistic attack when he tackles a second one. Hence, to argue backward, if the teaching of English is to help the teaching of French, the methods in the teaching of English must be largely the methods employed in French, allowance being made for the things that come more or less naturally in the mother tongue, at least with children of the educated classes, such as proper pronunciation, though there are not wanting people who urge that phonetics should form part of the English teacher's equipment if not of that of the English child. It must be admitted that the case when put in this way only demonstrates the advantage to French of English being taught on modern lines. It remains to be proved that such methods are best for the teaching of English itself. Evidence, however, is not wanting to prove

that the English taught on classical lines has been one of the worst taught subjects in our schools, whereas abroad the mother tongue, thanks to its commanding position in the curriculum and the modern methods applied to it, is one of the best taught subjects both in France and in Germany. A whole lecture might be devoted to an analysis of the different results obtained by the teaching according as it is based on classical or on modern lines. Here there is only room to indicate what the teaching ought to be in those schools where it is still classical in method. Much more attention needs to be given to the oral side from the very start. Pupils should learn not merely to read, but to read aloud. Clear enunciation and simple elocution should be taught and encouraged by the learning by heart of suitable poetry. All indistinctness and gabbling should be forbidden. Class exercise should be either in chorus or singly. The teacher, as in modern languages, should act as class leader whether in reading or recitation; he should as a rule first go over the course. The reading-book should be made the centre of instruction. Pupils should be practised not merely in the answering of questions, but also in the art of

repeating what they have read. Such repetition should first take an oral form. If properly practised it is one of the most valuable aids to written composition later. Grammar should be taught inductively. The pupils will "botanise" in the reading-book, and their specimens may be collected in note-books. Grammars should at first be used for reference, or at most for recapitulation. It is remarkable the small amount of grammar one needs at the outset in English. Of course revision is necessary from time to time, and a modicum of accidence can be learnt by heart to supplement points already met with in the reading. The ordinary boy who has learnt to read by 6 ought by 9 or 10 to be able to pick out the parts of speech, distinguish between such simple things as subject and object, verb and auxiliary, co-ordinate and subordinate sentences, and have acquired a knowledge of the plurals of the most common irregular nouns, of the comparison of adjectives, and of the tenses of the verbs together with a knowledge of the preterite and past participle of the commoner irregular verbs, but he must have chiefly learnt them out of the reading-book by trial and experiment, otherwise he will never distinguish "one from t'other."

Later on, when written composition is begun, it should take the form of reproduction rather than of original composition, and above all the art of describing things or processes in their chronological or logical order should be practised by means of the construction of simple skeletons. Literature teaching, again, should never degenerate into the study of rare and out of the way expressions, those *lusus naturæ* which it is the joy of the average grammarian to hunt down and catalogue, but in place of a merciless dissection of the text, poems should rather be studied as wholes, while the unit in prose should be the chapter or episode. Much should be committed to memory, not unintelligently, but after it has been commented on and explained. The study of the form will not mean the study of isolated word or construction, but the study of how the author put the whole thing together, what he aimed at, and how he accomplished his aims; in a word, the study of the art of expression, together with a study of the thing expressed, namely, the thought-content. All this is very brief and fragmentary, but may be made plainer if we call to mind the aim of the second stage in modern-language teaching, which was described as being literary rather

than grammatical or philological, aiming at culture rather than mere scholarship. Space prevents our dwelling further on the point, important as it is. Those who desire to hear more on the subject I would refer to a paper of mine on the training in literary taste and in the mother tongue, which was read at the Educational Congress at Bradford in 1904 and appeared in the *Journal of Education* for August of that year.

2. Allusion has already been made to the need of lists of suitable reading-books for the second stage. Every school, however, should not only draw up a list of authors to be used in all classes, but it should be careful to see that the number of different grammars and dictionaries used in the school is reduced to a minimum. At present in a good many schools we have reform books in the lower classes containing scattered lessons on grammar which may or may not be co-ordinated at the end of the book. Then when we draw near to the region of examinations, we have grammar and exercise books in English introduced, not infrequently a different one for every form. What is wanted when the first year or so is over is a simple grammar written in French, but for English boys,

because a French grammar for Frenchmen, does not touch on more than half our difficulties. Higher up the school we need a more elaborate grammar on the same lines, which, as far as I know, does not exist. Personally I would not rule out altogether existing English grammars, such as Mr. Clarke's, which are hard to replace. And certainly the more advanced grammars one finds in French schools, such as the *Grammaire Normale* of Alvarès and Rivail will be found very useful for reference. But put shortly, the co-ordination of class-books throughout the school is a serious condition in the success or failure of a proper curriculum.

3. We have already noted the need of plotting out the curriculum in every class, and of so co-ordinating the methods in each that one naturally leads to the other. This co-ordination is especially needful in respect of the teaching of conversation. Apart from the general conversation learnt from the reading-book, which may or may not be about common things, there ought to be a definite set of common topics allotted to each class, whether it be conversation on the time of day in the lower, or travelling or sight-seeing in a higher class. In this way only

can we hope to cover more or less the ground of common knowledge about the country. But to obtain this co-ordination there is only one satisfactory method, and that is for the headmaster to assign to one of the staff the oversight and responsibility of the teaching of modern languages throughout the school. There must be in fact a responsible "boss." It will be his duty to call his modern-language colleagues together and plan the curriculum and think out all details of method, etc., the headmaster acting, of course, as a final Court of Appeal.

4. But modern languages are after all not a thing by themselves. They are closely connected with the other literary subjects of the time-table. Their success depends in no small degree on the share they obtain of the time-table and the extent to which they can be co-ordinated with other subjects. Here again the need of conference between the various members of the staff, so real a thing in German schools, so perfunctory often in English, cannot be too strongly insisted on.

5. But good teaching requires adequate classroom accommodation. Modern language teaching is largely oral. Under the old conditions of teaching subjects it was possible

to take several classes in the same classroom, provided it were large enough, by massing the boys round the masters' desks at stated intervals down the room. Such conditions render the teaching on modern lines well-nigh impossible. They encourage all the evils that conduce to bad pronunciation, slovenliness of accent, and indistinctness of utterance, and render class practice, either in speaking or reading, impossible. The curtaining off the room into compartments is a mere palliative. What is wanted to-day is proper classroom accommodation. Science, thanks in part to its effect on the olfactory nerves, has conquered for itself rooms of its own. Let us hope that the conditions produced by the proper teaching of modern languages will so irritate the auditory nerves of those in the vicinity that the modern-language teacher will make good his claim to separate accommodation.

6. If French and German had classrooms of their own, which is quite possible in schools where they are the principal subjects, it would be advisable to make them as distinctively French or German as possible. Just as the French Embassy in London is territorially a bit of France in the midst of England, so the

French classroom should be as far as possible a French "enclave" in the middle of the English school. The walls should be decorated with French pictures and maps. There might be exact copies of the French weights and measures and facsimiles of the French coins; all the notices should be in French. Among the decorations might be a bust of the President and a copy of the Declaration of the *Droits des hommes*. There should be, in fact, a definitely French atmosphere about the room. The pupil should feel the change as he enters it, just as he feels the change on entering a church. I do not think we take into sufficient account the surroundings in which our pupils work and the effect of environment upon them.

7. One of the most important objects in the classroom should be the French library. If used by several classes, it should be divided into three sections—beginners, juniors, and seniors. Each section should contain easy and amusing reading-books suited to the standard of boys of each grade. I would specially commend the purchase of illustrated books. No boy would be obliged in the lower classes to take out a book, but all might be encouraged to do so. In the upper classes

definite time should, if possible, be assigned to private reading. From time to time in the winter reading classes might be formed in which easy plays might be read aloud, the teacher taking part and giving just the necessary explanation, pointing out, here and there, instances in the ever-running fire of wit that sparkles through the dialogues. At least one if not more weekly papers should be taken in. The illustrated papers are sure to tempt more than one inquisitive Alfred to learn the text for the sake of understanding the pictures. Professor Rippmann and his colleague give a useful list of these magazines, such as the *Magasin Illustré d'Education et de Récréation*, published by Hetzel; *Mon Journal* (a paper for younger folk), published by Hachette, and several others.

In addition a regular daily newspaper like the *Figaro* or *Débats* might be taken in for the upper boys.

8. But all these things are useless if boys do not stay a sufficient time in the school to profit by them. Now it is a most disquieting fact that in many towns the secondary schools are looked on merely as finishing institutions, to which a parent sends his child for a couple of terms or a year in order to be able to say

that the boy has been at such and such a school or college. In Liverpool, for instance, in the years 1901-2-3 more than half the boys who left the Institute had been there less than three years. In the commercial school attached to the Institute the average school life of the boys who left in 1903 was only 2.34 years, while the proportion of boys completing a proper four years' course was only 2.25 per cent of those leaving. Compare this with New York, where 5.93 or nearly 6 per cent of the pupils in public secondary schools completed during the years 1902-3 a course which in most cases began about the fourteenth year, and in no case lasted less than four years. The figures for the girls in Liverpool were nearly as disappointing.

One cause of this defect in many places is the belated age at which the pupils come over from the elementary schools. But in this respect things are much better than they were, and further improvement may be expected. The establishment of Junior Scholarships for pupils under 12 is familiarising people with the idea that a boy should enter the secondary school at 12 or thereabouts. Again, the elementary teachers are increasingly disposed to assist the transfer. In Liverpool, for instance, the Teachers' Association met

Professor Sadler and spontaneously offered to try and persuade the promising boys to come over to the secondary school at that age.

It is difficult to see how public authorities can directly remedy this defect. One palliative might be the granting of a "leaving letter" to such boys only as had spent three years in the really secondary part of the school, or although they had spent but one term in the school, had received such a previous education as to enable the headmaster to state that they had reached the same standard of attainment as the boys who had completed a three years' course. Efforts should be made to acquaint the business men of the district with the fact that no boy had really the right to call himself an *alumnus* of the school and thereby trade on its good name unless he possessed this certificate, and employers should be advised to ask all boys seeking for a post under them whether they were in possession of the school leaving-letter.

9. The entrance of boys at such different ages and at such different times has an evil effect not only on the boys themselves, but also on the classes they enter. The belated veteran who enters the school too late to begin at the beginning is often apt to be classed by age rather than by attainment. He accordingly

starts with such a handicap that he never makes up the lost ground, and only acts as a drag on the rest of the class. Again, the boy who does not enter at the beginning of the school year is equally at a disadvantage, owing to the fact that the rest of the class are at least a term's work ahead of him. This would not matter so much if the teaching were not based on the direct method. But here the lacuna is well-nigh fatal, as the vocabulary under study is sure to be to a certain extent special to the school. Of course if the boys are divided up into sets for modern languages, classification is much easier. But otherwise it is best to run a sort of "ambulance" class in French for all beginners who have, on account of their general attainments, been placed in higher classes, but have never been taught on the direct method. Time for such a class must be found by cutting an hour off some other subject, which can be more easily caught up later. In some schools boys might be persuaded to come half an hour earlier or stay half an hour later. The German system of insisting on the boy receiving private lessons at home does not seem practicable in England. Much might be done, however, if the local authority in those

schools over which it possessed control would make financial discriminations against such boys. Thus, a boy who joined at the beginning of the school year in September would pay (say) £2 a term, but if he joined after Christmas he might be made to pay £3 a term during the two terms preceding the new financial year, while boys who entered after 13, unless they came from another secondary school, might be made to pay a higher fee during their stay at school, say £2 : 10s. a term, while the others paid only £2. Some sort of discrimination against late comers or those who come at irregular times is really necessary, unless the school is able to do as the big German schools, and have two sets of parallel forms, with a school year beginning for the one in September and for the other at Christmas or Easter.

Another important factor to success is to have classes of a manageable size. Professor Rippmann and his colleague apparently came across classes of 40 and even 45. To teach the pupils satisfactorily in such classes on the direct method seems well-nigh impracticable. The work must be necessarily conducted in chorus. Individual practice and repetition on a large scale is impossible. It is worth

noting that the programme for *lycées* and *collèges* looks on 25 as a maximum, and says that in general it is desirable that this figure should not be reached.

10. But if the new methods not only demand more time for preparation than the old, under which the teacher as often as not lifts a ready-made lesson from the text-book, they also place a far greater strain on the teacher. He has, in the lower classes, to be a sort of *savant*, elocutionist, disciplinarian, and society entertainer rolled into one. Insurance societies in Germany, where teachers have far more spare time than with us, already discriminate between teachers of modern languages on the direct method and others. Their calling has become a comparatively dangerous trade, their expectation of life being four years shorter than that of the ordinary teacher. Yet the majority of our modern-language teachers teach hour for hour quite as long as the rest of the staff, that is to say, from 24 to 28 hours a week, in some cases 30. Yet if they are to retain their freshness they certainly ought not to teach over 20 hours; Dr. Breul suggests 16. It is noteworthy that in a typical German school the hours run from 22 to 20. As, however, five minutes must be deducted from

each for breaks, the total of the actual teaching periods ranges from just over 20 to just over 18.

11. Allusion has already been made incidentally to the need of competent teachers, and it has been indicated that in schools in which those who teach modern languages are not of equal efficiency the weaker members of the staff should be put on in the middle of the school, it being essential that the beginners should be properly taught, while the highest work necessarily demands the best teaching power. The practice of splitting up the work of a class between two or more teachers is generally a mistake. The reading-book, as we saw, is the centre of instruction, and unless there are two reading-books, the teacher who takes composition is cut off from one of the main sources of supply, for the reading-book should be largely utilised for retranslation and free composition ; again, it is a mistake to give the translation to one man only, unless he also takes the conversation lessons, which should be, at least in part, based on the reading-book.

12. There is, however, one case in which the work may be divided with advantage, and that is when a capable foreigner takes part in the teaching. But as a rule he should be on the staff. The visiting foreign-master is

generally a mistake. He has too many irons in the fire, and the boys have rarely the same respect for him as for a regular master. Probably the best solution, especially in boarding schools, is the appointment of a cultured young Frenchman as *assistant*. He could certainly take the upper boys in conversation, reading, and occasionally in free composition, while his presence on the staff would give the modern-language teachers a chance of keeping up their French. This method of appointing *assistants* has already been tried with success in several English schools, thanks to arrangements made between the Board of Education¹ and the French Ministry, and seems a more satisfactory system than the exchange of teachers, which is attended with many practical difficulties.

13. While we undoubtedly have a certain number of very capable foreigners teaching in our schools, the tendency seems more and more pronounced to substitute home-bred teachers for foreigners, although we have not reached the stage of eliminating the latter altogether out of

¹ For further particulars apply to the Director of Special Inquiries and Reports, Board of Education Library, St. Stephen's House, Westminster, through whom *assistants* may be procured.

our public schools, as Germany and France have done. Yet according to experts in these countries, the case is overwhelmingly in favour of the home-bred teacher when properly qualified. He may not have quite so perfect an accent, however saturated with the language he may be ; he cannot possess that instinct for the right thing in the language which is the native's birthright. With a great price he has attained his freedom, but the other is free-born. Yet the problem does not so much depend on the teacher's attainments as on his power of communicating his knowledge. The home-bred teacher knows the difficulties of his boys, he also knows their temper and temperament, which is still more important. He may not possess such a perfect accent as the foreigner, but he knows far better how to communicate his own pronunciation to the boys. In fact, paradox as it may seem, the foreigner unable to teach his class "instantly" the correct pronunciation, frequently ends by accepting the most slipshod accent—far more slipshod than any self-respecting English teacher would accept. He starts by correcting everything, he finishes by correcting nothing ; whereas what he ought to do is to teach how to form correct sounds, not to wait till

the sounds have been wrongly made and then correct them.

14. All these questions of smaller classes, reduced hours of teaching, and competent teachers, are at bottom purely financial questions. They mean, in a word, more teachers and better rates of pay. With their present income from endowments, grants, or fees, many of the schools cannot afford to staff their schools as they ought. It is to be hoped, however, that the Board of Education will shortly cease to maintain its present preferential treatment of science schools and level up the grant in the literary schools to the same standard. Otherwise the only hope for the subject is a more liberal grant from the local authorities.

15. Should the latter see their way to an augmentation of their present grants, education is likely in such a case to be a gainer in more ways than one. In return for increased financial support the local authority will be able to help things forward enormously if it will insist that in the aided schools the present haphazard and perfunctory teaching of the subject, which is far too common, should be improved out of existence. It is neither practicable nor desirable to draw up and

prescribe rigid curricula to which all must conform, but it is absolutely essential, if modern-language teaching is once for all to be put on a sound and logical basis, to insist on the due observance of certain definite principles in the teaching of the subject, while at the same time according a wide latitude to the degree to which they are to be enforced, and keeping thereby an open door for experiment. The greatest friend of liberty in the schools can hardly complain if the amount of the allowance is made to depend on compliance with the requirement, at the start, of an oral treatment of the subject, of a certain attention being paid to accent, of conversation being made a definite feature, of languages being studied in their proper order, and of the mother tongue being made the basis of linguistic instruction. Taking for their motto uniformity of principle with latitude of application, the authorities are likely to do little harm and much good by insisting on such a policy. This steady pressure would speedily bring the aided and municipal schools into line, and have a most contagious effect on the teaching of the other secondary schools. To ensure the carrying out of such a policy, it would be advisable to adopt the suggestion of

Professor Rippmann and appoint an inspector of modern languages, who would not only see that the main principles insisted on were observed, but would also act as master of method to the teachers. But as was pointed out at the start, however soon the local authority may get into the saddle, there must necessarily be a period of transition. The question therefore arises, How may this transitional period be rendered as little injurious as possible, and how may we definitely guard against a recurrence of the old order? Our final problem here is clearly to improve as far as we can the existing teachers, and secure a supply of properly trained and properly qualified teachers in the future.

We have already noticed the possibility of appointing *assistants* in the schools, and the value of their presence to the staff. In university towns like Liverpool and London, where the faculty of French fully organised, we might look to the lecturers attached to the universities to establish weekly conversation classes for teachers and give them lectures on French life and literature, especially in connection with modern times. And out of these again a regular French club might

spring. In other towns the local branch of the Teachers' Guild might start a French circle, in which French authors might be read aloud and French conversation indulged in.

In Liverpool, for instance, there is a regular French club, which teachers can join. The Alliance Française might well be asked to organise similar clubs or at least weekly reunions with or without lectures, in the larger towns. Here also is a sphere of activity that the society entitled "L'Entente Cordiale" might very properly exploit. Again, the County Council's modern-language inspector might organise meetings and classes during the winter session for teachers, dealing with various important points in the teaching, such as phonetics, the correct method of using the reading-book, or of teaching composition, etc. etc. Ambitious teachers in university towns might further follow the evening university courses which, it is to be hoped, would be sooner or later organised, whether for undergraduate or post-graduate study. The Education Committee of the County Council might offer a certain number of free scholarships for such courses. In the schools themselves there ought to be everywhere definite reference libraries for boys and

masters over and above the simple class library already suggested. In addition it would be an excellent thing if, as Professor Sadler proposes, a teachers' library and institute were established for education of all grades, containing a conference room and well-equipped teachers' library, through which books might be lent, not only to individual teachers but to the schools themselves. If, as he suggests, the institute should be open not merely to teachers but to all interested in education, the French club suggested above might well find its headquarters in the building. In addition to these facilities, teachers should be encouraged by means of scholarships to attend every year a holiday course abroad. These are, as a rule, very well organised and highly beneficial as a means for refreshing both one's accent and one's knowledge of the language. The Teachers' Guild publishes every year a complete list of such courses. And lastly, the German plan might be copied of allowing a teacher a year's furlough once in every seven years, in order to proceed to the country whose language he teaches or to others in which it is being taught. Not only is this sabbatical rest often very beneficial for the teacher's health, but it prevents also

mental staleness and stagnation, and sends the teacher home with new ideas.

The training of secondary teachers is still so much in its infancy that one cannot do more than throw out a certain number of hints, which may prove useful once the local authorities realise the seriousness of the question. Thus, as far as modern languages are concerned, the municipality might offer a certain number of scholarships yearly, tenable at the local university, for pupils who had distinguished themselves in modern languages in the schools of the district. Students already in residence at the university might be encouraged to spend their summer vacation in France or Germany, the municipality finding the requisite funds for the purpose; and lastly, for those who had taken a modern-language degree at the university, the municipality might found a limited number of travelling scholarships after the example of several towns in Germany. The pupils who were thus sent abroad might be affiliated to a foreign university or institution, and might be required to produce a thesis on some modern subject in the foreign language. In that way the donors of the scholarships would be certain that their money was not ill-spent.

Again, it is possible that the present system of sending students from our elementary training colleges to a French normal college for their third year might be further extended. Still more is to be hoped from the exchange of *assistants* and lecturers for whom the French Government is at present finding places in many *lycées* and *collèges*, and even in the universities. In return for two or three hours' work a week these fortunate individuals are allowed to be present at any classes they please and receive board and lodgings in return for their services.

In conclusion I wish to emphasise one or two points which I trust I have already incidentally brought out. One is, the necessity of a properly thought out modern language or rather language course, without which the best of teaching must lose half its effectiveness. Hence the necessity, if we are not to tackle the problem at the wrong end, of establishing, at the very start, the principles on which such a course should be developed. We may not, it is true, be able at once to think it out, much less to put it wholly into practice, but we must have the general idea of it always before us, we must be ever striving to realise it more and more

whenever the opportunity offers, we must consider every change or experiment with reference to it, if we are not to hamper or hinder its due evolution.

Again, though our theme has been principally the teaching of modern languages, I hope I have made clear on more than one occasion the supreme importance of considering them always in reference to the teaching of the other subjects, and especially of the other literary subjects. A proper curriculum must have co-ordination and balance.

And lastly, I hope I have made it abundantly clear that we can never have in England a system of teaching modern languages worthy of the name unless our big local authorities come to the rescue, and judiciously supplement the present inadequate grants of the Board of Education.

APPENDIX

FRANKFORT

TABLE SHOWING NUMBER OF HOURS PER

N.B.—An hour's lesson

SUBJECT.	COMMON FOUNDATION OF NON-CLASSICAL EDUCATION.			GYMNASIUM.		
	VI.	V.	IV.	IIIb.	IIIa.	IIb.
Religious Instruction . . .	3	2	2	2	2	2
German and Historical Nar- rative	4 } 5 1 }	3 } 4 1 }	4	3	3	3
Latin	...	...	...	10	10	8
Greek	...	...	...	...	...	8
French	6	6	6	3	2	2
English	...	...	...	...	...	...
History and Geography .	2	2	6	3	4	2
Mathematics and Arithmetic	5	5	5	4	4	3
Science	2	2	3	2	2	2
Writing	2	2	...	...	...	...
Drawing	...	2	2	2	2	...
TOTAL . . .	25	25	28	29	29	30

Physical Exercises in all classes, 3 hours a week.

Singing in IV. and V., 2 hours a week.

Optional instruction in English and Hebrew,

A SYSTEM

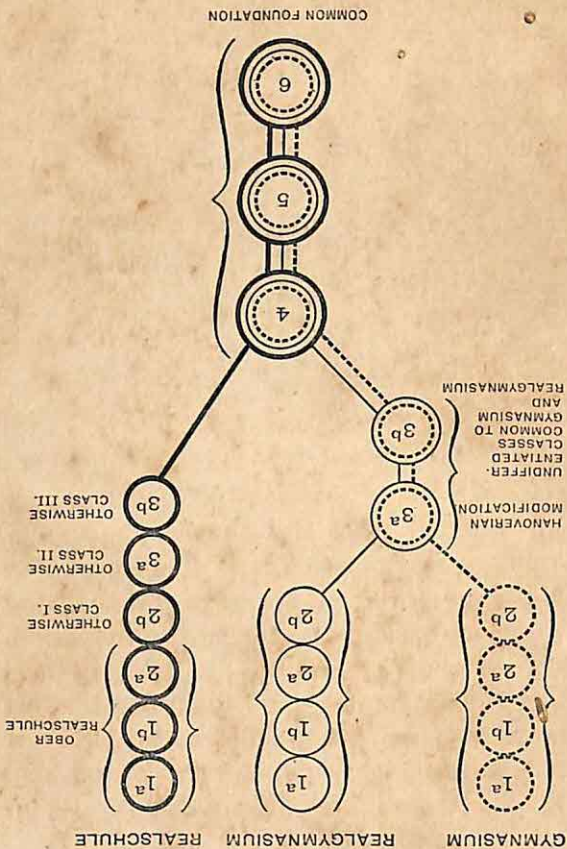
WEEK ALLOTTED TO VARIOUS SUBJECTS

= 50 minutes.

GYMNASIUM.				REALGYMNASIUM.						
IIa.	Ib.	Ia.	TOTAL.	IIIb.	IIIa.	IIb.	IIa.	Ib.	Ia.	TOTAL.
2	2	2	19	2	2	2	2	2	2	19
3	3	3	31	3	3	3	3	3	3	31
8	8	7	51	8	8	6	6	5	5	38
8	8	8	32	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
2	2	2	31	4	4	3	3	3	3	38
...	...	...	...	...	...	6	4	4	4	18
2	2	3	26	4	4	3	3	3	3	30
3	3	3	35	4	4	4	5	5	5	42
2	2	2	19	3	3	3	4	5	5	30
...	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
...	...	...	8	2	2	2	2	2	2	16
30	30	30	256	30	30	32	32	32	32	266

2 hours a week in IIa. and Ib.

DIAGRAM OF THE FRANKFORT PLAN,
WITH THE HANOVERIAN MODIFICATION.



APPENDIX B

Hanover and Breslau have each a slightly different time-table for their Gymnasium and Realgymnasium. Instead of the bifurcation taking place after Form IV., they have assimilated the work in IIIb and IIIa, so as to give a five years' course in common; so that a pupil has not to decide till he is 14 whether he will follow a purely classical or a Latin-modern course: truly a great gain, as the following diagram shows:—

[DIAGRAM

